have been granted consular access and whose national status has been verified, would be released by 30 June 2006. in addition, they also agreed to exchange lists of civilian prisoners by 15 June 2006 to facilitate the consular access by 31 July 2006 and subsequent release. Following this understanding, consular access to 192 Indian fishermen and 48 civilian prisoners was given by Pakistan, while India provided consular access to 42 Pakistani civilian prisoners in July 2006.

(e) and (f) The centrally sponsored insurance scheme for fishermen is under the control of Ministry of Agriculture. According to this all fishermen in marine and inland sector are covered against death, permanent/partial disability suffered during fishing. The insurance policy in respect of the beneficiaries from coastal States are shared equally between Centre and States while in respect of UTs, the insurance policy is fully borne by the Centre. The National Federation of fishermen's Cooperatives Ltd. (Fishcopfed) is the implementing agency. Compensation for death/ permanent total disability is Rs. 50,000/- and the cover for partial/permanent disability is Rs. 25,000.

Shortage of staff in passport offices

1076. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is acute shortage of staff at various passport offices in this country including Trichy and Chennai;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when these vacancies are likely to be filled up; and

(d) whether Government open more Regional Passport Offices in Tamil Nadu?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In view of the growing workload, all passport offices, including those at Trichy and Chennai are experiencing shortage of manpower.

(c) The Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Ministry of Finance had carried out a detailed work study in Passport Offices in India. The SIU has recommended creation of 293 additional posts in various categories. The matter is under consideration in the Ministry of Finance.

(d) There is a demand for opening of new Passport Office at various places in Tamil Nadu. However, no decision has been taken so far.